

*Atlantic Richfield Company*  
**Rico Cleanup Bulletin No. 2**  
*May 29, 1996*

The Rico Cleanup Bulletin is periodically published by Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) to keep Rico residents and property owners, as well as other interested parties, fully informed about its voluntary environmental cleanup activities in the Rico area.

**Bulletin No. 2 Highlights**

- State of Colorado approves four environmental voluntary cleanup plans.
- Work activity to begin by mid-June.
- Evaluation of soils throughout Rico completed - the Grand View smelter site targeted for cleanup.
- Colorado School of Mines to evaluate water discharge problems at St. Louis Tunnel.
- Community meeting scheduled for June 4 at Rico Town Hall
- Background of the Rico Voluntary Cleanup Project

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## **Background of the Rico Voluntary Cleanup Project**

ARCO is working closely with property owners, the Town of Rico and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on a voluntary program to stabilize and clean up a number of mining-related sites in the Rico area.

Like many Western communities, Rico's legacy of a robust mining history is the accumulation of mine wastes that contain concentrations of natural occurring metals. Some of these wastes are found along the waters of Silver Creek and the Dolores River. In other cases, metal-bearing water is being discharged from old mine workings and mill tailings.

## **Colorado's Voluntary Cleanup Program**

In 1994 the Colorado Legislature enacted the *Colorado Voluntary Cleanup and Redevelopment Act*, which encourages parties to voluntarily remediate waste sites. Through its predecessor, Anaconda Minerals Company, ARCO previously had limited involvement in the Rico area and therefore, is participating in Colorado's voluntary program.

The voluntary program can be beneficial for all concerned by resulting in a technically sound, cost-effective cleanup, without the stigma on the community of "Superfund" designation by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Consequently, ARCO has been working with individual property owners, the Town of Rico and State of Colorado officials to plan and carry out certain remediation projects within the Rico area.

## **State of Colorado Approves Four Cleanup Projects**

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has approved four remediation projects which were prepared and submitted by ARCO on behalf of the current property owners. Construction bids for the remediation work will be let in early June and work activity is scheduled to be underway about June 15th.

### **Silver Swan Mine**

Located just south of Rico along the west side of the Dolores River, rock waste from the mine is piled adjacent to the main river channel. Remediation plans call for moving the waste piles away from the river channel and stabilizing them to prevent further erosion and infiltration. Water discharging through the waste will be captured and routed to a settling pond in order to reduce discharges into the Dolores River. The most visible aspect of the project will be replacement of bare soils and rock with grass and vegetation cover, as well as the preservation of existing natural wetlands.

### **Santa Cruz Mine**

Located on the west side the Dolores River across from town, the site has mine rock in direct contact with wetlands and beaver ponds, and discharges mine drainage water. Remedial action plans are similar to those of the Silver Swan Mine. Rock material will be pulled back so that they are not in direct contact with surface waters and stabilized in place to prevent future erosion and infiltration. The area will be compacted and covered with soil and vegetation. A settling pond will also be used to reduce discharges into the river.

### **Columbia Tailings**

Located at the south end of Rico just to the west of the gas station, the site contains mill tailings which are separated from the main channel of the Dolores River by the old railroad grade. Water collects on top of the tailings and infiltrates through them, resulting in metal bearing water seeping into the river. Cleanup plans are designed to inhibit this infiltration and create drainage controls which will prevent surface water from running through the tailings. After remediation activities are completed, the existing bare soils will be covered with vegetation and parking area will be created at the reclamation site for cars and recreational vehicles.

### **Argentine Tailings**

Located east of Rico about one mile up Silver Creek, the site has a large tailings impoundment produced by the Rico-Argentine mill. The tailings piles are bare, have steep slopes and like Columbia Tailings, have surface water running through them. Remedial action plans include recontouring and flattening the slopes, compacting and covering the surface with soil, rock mulch and vegetation, in order to reduce the infiltration of water through the waste piles. Recontouring and revegetation of the site will provide a grassy, "amphitheater" terrain.

## Remediation Schedule

Remediation activities will be fully underway this Summer in the Rico area and should be concluded by late October of this year. In order to accomplish this schedule, construction bids will be let in early June and work underway by June 15th.

Following cleanup activities, ARCO will monitor the sites and conduct water quality sampling for a two year period. Thereafter, individual property owners should visually monitor the sites for an additional three years.

## Community Soils

ARCO has conducted an evaluation of metals in soil materials throughout the town of Rico in order to determine whether remediation of mine-related wastes is needed.

As a result, ARCO has identified one area - the site of the old Grand View Smelter - which should be remediated through the State's voluntary program. A cleanup application has been prepared for this site and submitted to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

In addition, ARCO has identified several small sites which can be quickly cleaned up without going through the formal process. These include the Atlantic Cable and Van Winkle mine sites, which will be stabilized and preserved as part of Rico's mining heritage.

A copy of the Grand View Smelter application, which includes a comprehensive assessment of community soil data, has been filed at the Rico Town Hall. Additionally, if local property owners would like information about sampling that occurred on their property, they can call the Rico Community Hotline at 1-800-914-4515 to schedule a briefing.

## School of Mines to Study St. Louis Tunnel Problems

As reported by the Telluride Daily Planet in its May 3, 1996 edition, the State of Colorado continues to have concerns about mine water which is discharging from the St. Louis Tunnel.

All parties involved in this project are working to find a technical solution to the discharge problem. Specialists from the Colorado School of Mines have been asked to evaluate the situation and determine whether more effective measures can be taken to reduce the impacts of mine water discharges from the St. Louis Tunnel.

### Public Meeting Scheduled

A public meeting has been scheduled on the ARCO voluntary cleanup program, which will allow residents and interested parties to learn more about remediation plans and ask questions. A particular focus of the session will be the analysis of community soils.

**Community Meeting**

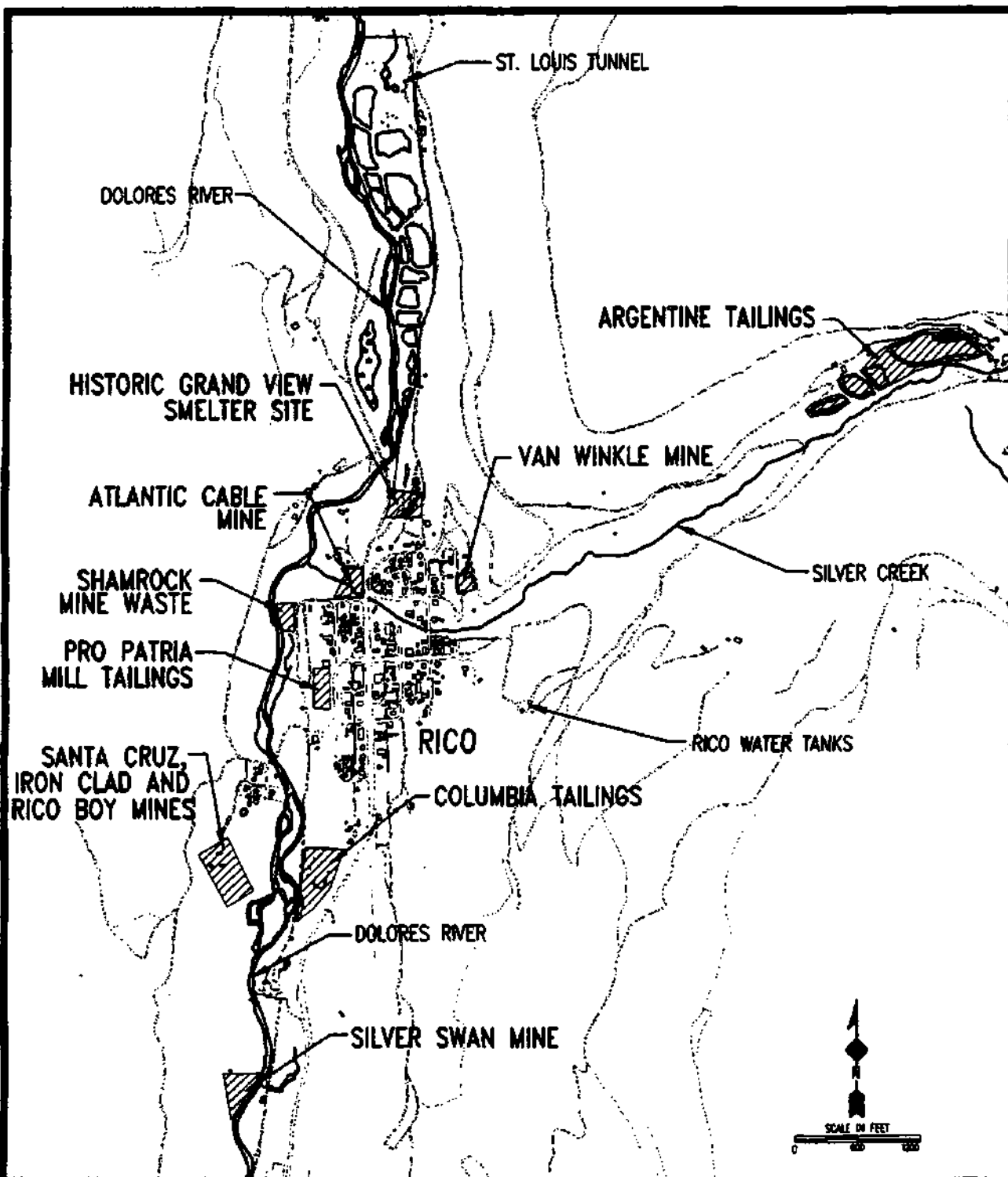
**June 4, 1996 - 7:00 pm**

**Rico Town Hall**

## Public Information & Comment

ARCO invites the residents of Rico and other interested parties to review and comment on this environmental project. Information available about the project includes an alternatives analysis describing available options, a set of State-approved Voluntary Cleanup Plans and related documents. These records are available during normal business hours at the Rico Town Hall, which is located at 2 North Commercial Street in Rico.

Written and oral comments are invited on the project to supplement previous public hearings and comment sessions. Comments should be directed within 30 days to Cynthia Kezos through the Rico Community Hotline at 1-800-914-4515, or in writing to her at Atlantic Richfield Company, 555 17th Street, 16th Floor, Denver, CO 80202.



 SITES INCLUDED IN VOLUNTARY  
CLEAN-UP PROGRAM

# VOLUNTARY CLEAN-UP PROGRAM SITE LOCATION MAP RICO, COLORADO

RC52F813

3-13-96

If you have any questions about the voluntary program, please contact ARCO's Project Administrator Cynthia Kezos through the Rico Community Hotline at...  
1-800-914-4515.